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MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.

THE first of these concerts after the Christmas recess took place on Monday last, at St. James's Hall. The pianoforte portion of these admirable musical entertainments being now exclusively confined to two artists, we have only to record that, being Mr. Charles Hallé's turn, he re-appeared on this occasion, and performed, with his usual success, Beethoven's "Sonata Appassionata," for pianoforte alone; and also took part with M. Vieuxtemps (who made his first appearance) in Mozart's Sonata in B flat major, for violin and pianoforte (dedicated to Madlle. Strinassacchi), a work admirably calculated to develop the classical style of both executants. Believing as we do that it is good for an audience—especially one composed of such earnest listeners as we find at these concerts—to hear and compare the styles of the great instrumentalists of the day, we are glad to find that the first violin is often placed in different hands; and we welcome therefore the appearance of M. Vieuxtemps as an artist demanding, by right of merit, his place in the season. Besides Mozart's Sonata, already mentioned, he led Mendelssohn's Quartett in A minor, and Haydn's in D major, No. 6, Op. 50, (assisted most ably in both by Messrs. L. Ries, H. Webb, and Paque), in all which compositions his steady playing and correct phrasing were well displayed. The vocalists were Madame Parepa and Mr. Santley, the former of whom sang Gounod's "Quand tu chantes bergée," (the accompaniment to which, for pianoforte and harmonium, was beautifully played by M. Benedict and Herr Engel), and Benedict's characteristic song "What shall I sing?" Mr. Santley sang, in the faultless style to which he has now accustomed us, Gounod's "Pilgrim," imitated into English by Mr. Chorley, and Arditi's "Stirrup-cup." The concert was extremely well attended.

MADAME LIND-GOLDSCHMIDT AT EXETER HALL.

ON Tuesday, the 5th ult., Madame Goldschmidt again gave her valuable services in the cause of charity, adding one more to the many spontaneous acts of benevolence which have already endeared her name—even to those who have not had the opportunity of appreciating her as a vocalist. Few indeed have been the instances of celebrated artists stepping forth from the retirement which they have fairly earned, and working earnestly and zealously for the poor and needy; and great indeed should be the support accorded to such exertion, not only for the sake of charity, but for the purpose of proving how highly such noble self-sacrifice is estimated by the public. On this occasion the performance was in aid of the funds of the Friend of the Clergy Corporation, an institution established for the purpose of providing for the widows and orphan daughters of clergymen, and also for granting temporary relief to distressed clergymen and their families. The *Messiah* was most appropriately selected for representation; and in every respect it was most admirably performed. Madame Goldschmidt was, as usual, filled with that earnest and heartfelt reverence for the composition which throws such a charm over her singing, and lends an inspiration to her features so truly in accordance with the sublime strains of Handel. The airs "How beautiful are the feet," and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," were given with a depth of feeling which cannot be acted; and in spite of the nature of the subject, the audience testified their pleasure by loud and prolonged applause. The other vocalists were Madame Sainton-Dolby, who sang with her accustomed care and finished style, Mr. Wilbye Cooper, and Mr. Weiss. The band and chorus were extremely good—the chorus especially attacking the points with a firmness only obtainable by a body of experienced singers—and Mr. Otto Goldschmidt conducted with his usual ability. The hall was crowded in every part; and we have little doubt that a large sum will be realised towards the funds of the praiseworthy charity for whose benefit the performance was given.

Queens of Song. By ELLEN CREATHORNE CLAYTON. In Two Vols. London: Smith, Elder, and Co.

IN these two attractive volumes, Miss Clayton has contrived to interest all who love to trace the origin and various fortunes of the many *prime donne* who have held sway over the public mind, from the time when Katherine Tofts and Margarita De L'Epine reigned in rivalry at the commencement of the eighteenth century, to the present day. The introduction of the Italian Opera into England may be said to have founded the dynasty of the "Queens of Song;" for before that time the scattered songs and choruses in the dramas that were acted did not afford sufficient display to any one singer to create a marked impression on the public, and we know little even of those vocalists who sang in the operas of Purcell. The weak imitations of Italian opera—the earliest of which was *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus*, "set," as it was then called, by Master Clayton—paved the way in England for a long series of lyrical productions, which have gradually refined and cultivated the musical taste, until opera has taken its stand as one of the firm institutions of the country. A book, therefore, which professes to give a sketch of the career of those who have not only held us entranced by their own natural endowments, but have given vitality to the many works of genius which have been from time to time created, will be welcomed as an agreeable addition to our biographical libraries. Passing through many pleasant pages devoted to stars of a lesser magnitude, we trace with much satisfaction the life of Mrs. Billington, whose chequered fortunes interest us almost as much as her brilliant achievements before the public. In her early days an anecdote is related, which shows how she was appreciated by those capable of judging. Reynolds was painting her portrait in the character of St. Cecilia, when Haydn, the composer, called. After contemplating the picture attentively, he said, "But you have made a great mistake." The painter started up aghast, "How! What?" "Why," said Haydn, "you have represented Mrs. Billington listening to the angels: you should have made the angels listening to her." It is melancholy to reflect that a person to whom such a compliment could be paid, should be in after life subject to the brutal treatment of a husband of whom she entertained the greatest dread. Such, however, was the case; and this gifted woman, who had been for years the idol of the public, was laid on a bed of sickness, from which she never recovered, by a blow from his hand. The biographies of Catalani, Malibran, Viardot Garcia, and Miss Stephens (afterwards Countess of Essex), contain matter of much interest; and the materials for the career of Clara Novello seem to have been carefully put together. It is exceedingly gratifying to read of the deep interest Malibran took in the future of the young Clara. "I love very few persons" she said; "but those I do love, I *love*," and her eyes beamed with intense devotion and fervency. "You need not be anxious for your daughter," she exclaimed to Mrs. Novello, who nursed her in her dying moments, "she is in the right way; she cannot fail of obtaining the highest rank in the profession, with her voice and the education she has received." How these prophetic words were fulfilled it is unnecessary to say. Although we are proud of her in England, it was not here alone that her triumphs were achieved. Mendelssohn wrote from Leipsic, "The greatest singers in Germany are Miss Clara Novello and Mrs. Alfred Shaw;" and in Italy she was idolized as *la bella Inglese*. Here, however, we cannot forget that her lovely voice was heard for the last time in public; and, unlike most vocalists, taking her farewell in full possession of her powers, our regret at her great loss can only be softened by the consciousness that she retires, as the Countess Gigliucci, into a happy private life. Whilst commending this book, and cordially hoping that it may find many readers, we cannot but wish that more attention had been paid to the facts. We regret to see that many errors have crept in—especially in the list of operas—which, by a careful revision, might have been avoided. Again, we know that it is a delicate